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ABSTRACT

A description is presented of a model teacher induction program that has been evaluated as very effective. When the first-year teacher signs a contract in a participating school, the Induction Support Team is formed immediately. This team consists of a school administrator, a mentor teacher, and a University consultant. The purpose of the team is to provide a complete staff to assist the beginning teacher in whatever concerns or needs are deemed necessary in an on-going, year-long teaching situation. The role and responsibilities of each team member are described. During the orientation session, each inductee, with the assistance of the team, initiates a Personal Development Plan. This plan provides the inductee an opportunity to identify accomplishments and concerns about teaching in six major categories: (1) planning; (2) management of student conduct; (3) instructional organization; (4) presentation of subject matter; (5) communications; and (6) testing. The university provides the mentor with a program of orientation and training as well as two graduate courses each for three credits. These courses are open only to the mentor teachers who are working with an inductee. (JD)

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TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM

(AN IN-SERVICE PROGRAM FOR FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS)

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TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM

(AN IN-SERVICE PROGRAM FOR FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS)

AT

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Teacher induction, an in-service program for first-year teachers and currently a national trend, was initiated by the Wisconsin Improvement Program in 1971 and implemented in 1974 by University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. From 1974-84, the UW-W experimented and developed a program to provide in-service assistance and support for first-year teachers to facilitate the transition from pre-service to in-service education. During the 1984-85 academic year, twelve first-year teachers from six school districts participated in the program. During 1985-86, twenty-one inductees from ten school districts are participating in the program. The twenty-one first-year teachers (inductees) are receiving support and assistance from twenty-one mentor teachers, fourteen local administrators, and twelve University faculty from three different departments in the College of Education.

Research conducted by Ryan (1970), Lortie (1975), and Elias, Fisher, and Simon (1980), and others revealed that problems of beginning teachers are discipline, isolation, evaluation of student work, and use of appropriate materials. Houston (1980) reported research which studied the problems and concerns of beginning teachers at selected times immediately preceding and during the first year of teaching. His research found that these concerns focused on discipline, methods, doing well in the eyes of the administration, and communication in the school social setting. Houston stated: "Teacher

training institutions may never be able to prepare beginning teachers adequately unless preservice teachers are provided the opportunity to experience fully the responsibilities of teaching." Bush (1983) has stated that "under current conditions, the newcomers have to learn to swim very quickly or they will sink," and this results in a "survival mentality." Peterson (1982) has stated that the first year of teaching is the most crucial period in a teacher's career. Sandefur (1982) has stated that the lack of appropriate induction is the major cause of teachers leaving the profession during the first three years of teaching. The 1984 Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Task Force Report on Teaching and Teacher Education indicates: (1) that the most academically able teachers tend to be the first to leave education and are doing so in increasing numbers; and (2) approximately 50 percent of those who take jobs as teachers leave the teaching profession within five years.

Howsam (1976) made the following recommendation:

> Teacher preparation programs must consider the provision of a year of internship as an imperative for adequately training teachers. It has been recommended by the AACTE Bicentennial Commission on Education for the Profession of Teaching that the internship in teacher education be defined as a minimum of one year of supervised employment and that it be made an integral part of all teacher preparation programs.

In attempting to meet this need for support and assistance by first-year teachers and smooth the transition from pre-service to in-service education, the College of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, in partnership with the Wisconsin Improvement Program and local schools, developed a Teacher Induction Experience for first-year teachers.

PROGRAM GOALS:

The specific goals of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Teacher Induction Program are:

1. To provide a planned first-year teaching experience which makes possible a broad variety of professional learning experiences.

2. To reach a level of professional skill and judgment which characterizes a well-qualified career teacher.

3. To raise professional competency to a level distinctly above that of the beginning teacher holding a bachelor's degree.

4. To re-explore numerous teaching techniques/strategies and experience others.

5. To develop extensive professional understanding and familiarity within the inductee's scope of certification.

6. To synthesize various learning theories and to study their application to different types of teaching and learning.

7. To develop an individual teaching style based on broad observation, discussion, and consultation.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

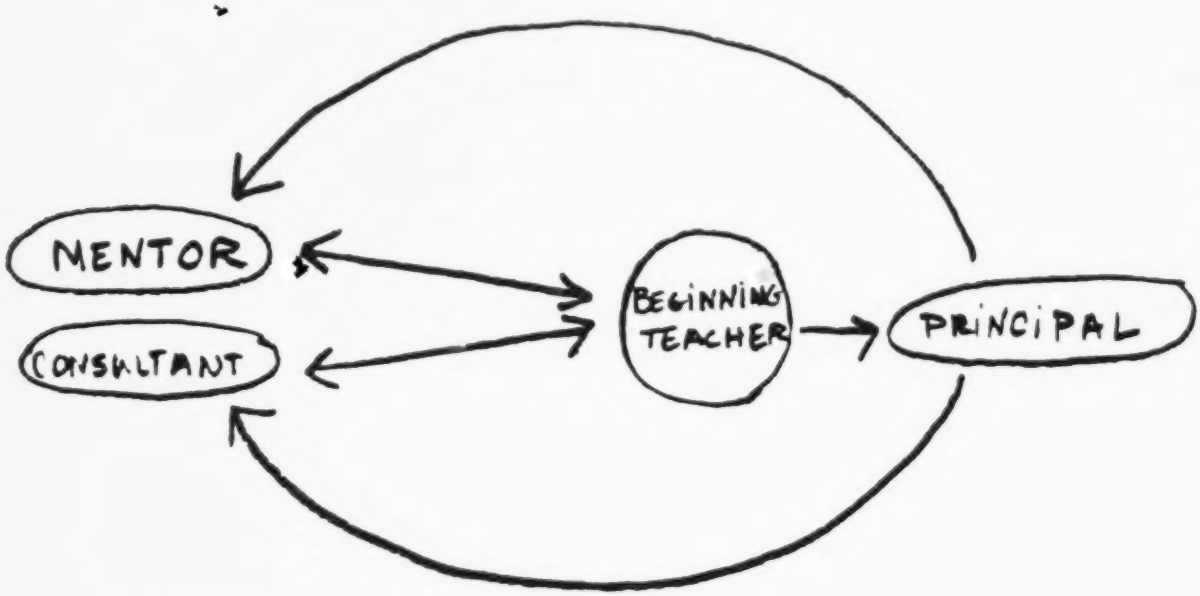
When the first-year teacher signs a contract in a participating school, the Induction Support Team is formed immediately. This team consists of (1) an administrator, (2) a mentor teacher, and (3) a University consultant. The purpose of the team is to provide a complete staff to assist the inductee (first-year teacher) in whatever concerns/needs deemed necessary in an on-going year-long teaching situation.

The model for the Induction Program, Diagram 1, shows the

inductee at the center of the team. Information is exchanged between inductee, mentor and university consultant. The flow of information is one directional from administration to the inductee and team. As a result, the inductee is assured that the concerns and questions will be used to assist as opposed to becoming a part of the file for evaluation for retention.

Diagram 1

Model for Teacher Induction Program[1]



[1] Wisconsin Improvement Program, The Teacher Induction Project, Peter Burke, Executive Secretary. 1984.

The administrator (principal or representative of the central administration) serves as a representative of administration and assists the team in overall school polices and procedures. The administrator provides input on fiscal matters, board policies, scheduling, substitutes, and other related items. This administrator should not be a part of the evaluation team that will determine the retention or dismissal of the new teacher.

The mentor teacher is a teacher in the inductee's school who is teaching the same subject/grade level as the inductee. The mentor is the key person on the support team and, as such, must be carefully selected. It is the mentor's responsibility to assist the inductee on a daily/weekly basis. This assistance will be in response to concerns/questions posed by the inductee as well as the reinforcement of any accomplishments which the inductee reports.

To assist the mentor teacher, [in assuming these responsibilities,] the University provides a program of orientation and training as well as two graduate courses each for three credits. These courses are open only to the mentor teachers who are working with an inductee. The major emphases of these courses are :

(1) to explore the role of the mentor teacher,

(2) to identify the characteristics of an effective teacher,

(3) to explore conferencing procedures with the inductee in self-evaluation techniques, and

(4) to become proficient in supervisory methods and procedures.

These courses provide the mentor an opportunity to explore effective teaching and how to improve the performance of a colleague.

The University Consultant is a specialist in the teaching methodology of the subject/grade level of the inductee. Some of the duties and responsibilities of the university specialist are:

1. to have professional expertise in the teaching methodology of the subject/grade level of the inductee.
2. to have teaching experience in the subject/grade level.
3. to assist the mentor and inductee through monthly on-site conferences.
4. to provide the resources of the university.
5. to support the inductee in self evaluation and increased effectiveness as a teacher.

All four team members--inductee, administrator, mentor teacher, and university specialist--meet before school starts for a program orientation organized and sponsored by the university. The purposes of this orientation session are:

1. to acquaint the team members with the philosophy and goals of the program.
2. to begin planning for action in the classroom
   a. curriculum planning,
   b. lesson planning,
   c. management of student conduct.
3. to review principles of learning and anatomy of a lesson.

4. to identify effective relationships in the school setting.
5. to identify the channels of effective communication in a school setting.

This orientation acquaints all participants with the program and establishes the communication and planning that is necessary to assist the first-year teachers in preparing for the start of the school year. During the orientation session, each inductee with the assistance of the team initiates his/her own Personal Development Plan. This Plan provides the inductee an opportunity to identify accomplishments and concerns about teaching in six major categories. After the concerns have been identified, the mentor and university specialist confer with the inductee to establish the priority of these concerns and suggest/recommend methods/information to overcome them. This Personal Development Plan becomes a continuous working document throughout the first year. Through the Plan, the inductee is encouraged to seek assistance from the mentor teacher on a day-to-day basis, at daily/weekly conferences, and from the university specialist by weekly written reports and monthly on-site visitations. At the monthly on-site visitation, the accomplishments of the first-year teacher are reviewed with the mentor and inductee. Through this conference, the inductee identifies areas of growth as a teacher and establishes goals for increasing effectiveness.

To assist the induction team, the Domains identified in the Florida Performance Measurement System have been used. The domains are (1) planning; (2) management of student conduct; (3) instructional organization and development; (4) presentation of subject matter; (5) communication; and (6) testing. The teams are encouraged to utilize

these domains to establish the goals for the inductee and to provide a common definition of effective teaching.

In addition to the monthly on-site visitation by the university specialist, monthly seminars are held to assist the team. The topics of the seminars are management of student conduct, evaluation, parent conferencing, anatomy of a lesson, and dealing with exceptional learners. All members of the induction team are encouraged to attend these seminars to review the progress of the inductee and plan for future growth.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

School systems who have employed an inexperienced teacher may voluntarily participate in the Teacher Induction Experience. The contractual arrangement between the school and the first-year teacher is according to the school's master contract with salary commensurate with load. Additional costs to the participating school consist of $600 of in-service monies. These monies are divided equally between local in-service activities for the benefit of the local school participants and broad based in-service activities sponsored by the university for the benefit of all participants. It is anticipated that in the future, state monies will assist financially participating schools and universities.

The first-year teacher is admitted to the Graduate School and enrolls for three to six graduate credits each semester. These credits may be applied toward a master's degree. This course work is completed in the employing school through on-site conferences, individual study supervised by the university consultant.

University costs consist of (1) administration; (2) faculty time

for supervision; (3) seminars; (4) $200 per inductee for broad-based in-service fund; (5) research and program evaluation; (6) graduate credit for mentor training courses; (7) program orientation seminar as well as other incidental costs.

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

An experimental design was developed by Linda Parker, Department of Public Instruction staff, to study the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Teacher Induction Program during the 1984-85 academic year. The design included twelve inductees as the experimental group and twelve randomly selected first-year teachers who were not in an induction program as the control group. The goal of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the services provided to the first-year teachers involved in the induction program. In order to accomplish this goal, the following procedures were used:

(1) Interviews--A series of three in-depth interviews was made with every first-year teacher in both groups to document each teacher's progress throughout the first year of teaching. These interviews focused on (a) the kinds of problems being experienced by the first-year teacher, (b) the kinds of assistance provided and their source, (c) perceptions regarding strengths and weaknesses of the assistance provided, (d) perceived effects of assistance on their teaching practices and ability to problem solve, and (e) how the program might be improved.

(2) Questionnaire--All persons involved in the delivery of service to the first-year teachers were surveyed to determine their satisfaction with the program, their perceptions regarding the program's strengths/weaknesses, and how it might be improved.

mentors and to experience the in-services which were offered.

Other findings are:

1. ninety-two percent of the mentors during the 1984-85 year enjoyed working with the first-year teachers and 100 percent of the mentors during the 1985-86 year indicated on November 13, 1985, they would like to be a mentor again. The mentors indicated the program was "challenging," "rewarding," and "revitalizing" as reasons for satisfaction in the program.

2. One hundred percent of the principals indicated the program was effective in their schools because of the assistance for the first-year teacher and the professional stimulation for the mentor teacher.

3. 66.7 percent of the mentors during the 1984-85 year reported the need for more shared time between mentor and inductee and 100 percent of the mentors during the 1985-86 year indicated on November 13, 1985, that they believe a free period for the mentor is very important in the program.

4. Inductees reported a need for added orientation to the teaching assignment.

5. Mentor teachers have indicated the need for training as mentors on such topics as effective teaching and supervisory techniques.

In the preceding item 3, a need was indicated for released time for the mentors. In order to provide this released time for the mentor and the inductee, a Teacher Assistant Program is being developed and implemented during spring semester of the 1985-86

academic year. This program is designed to provide a carefully screened undergraduate student as a certified member of the Induction Team. This Teacher Assistant would be assigned a 20 percent teaching load taken from the mentor's teaching responsibilities. This Assistant would be in the school for the full semester under the guidance of the mentor and would have 80 percent released time to team teach, student teach and confer with the mentor regarding the teaching of the classes. This carefully guided experience would meet the requirements of student teaching for initial certification. It would also be possible for the Assistant to relieve the inductee of some classes on a limited basis to provide the inductee time to observe the mentor teacher or other teachers and engage in learning activities to improve teaching competence.

This Induction Team would consist of a mentor teacher, a new teacher (inductee), and a pre-service teacher (teacher assistant) in combination with a university specialist. Working together, this team would study the process of teaching and would provide a differentiated staff approach to the classroom. Through the common planning sessions and discussions on teaching, curriculum, and evaluation, the team would provide the pre-service teacher with a broad range of experiences. The Inductee would learn from the mentor that experimentation is an on-going process in teaching. The mentor would have ideas and methods challenged while obtaining new methods and ideas that would be stimulating to all the participants. The University would gain an opportunity to extend the teacher training process from pre-service (academic courses) and clinical experiences (student teaching) to in-service where professional type training, studying, and learning can take place. This university involvement

would provide the College of Education faculty information which should enrich their pre-clinical courses as well as their professional graduate courses.

ISSUES RELATED TO TEACHER INDUCTION:

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Teacher Induction Program has been endorsed at many levels. It has been recognized by (1) SHOWCASE FOR EXCELLENCE AWARD (1985) sponsored by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities; (2) Wisconsin Association of Teacher Educators (1984); and (3) Educational Testing Service cited the program as one of 20 exemplary programs in the nation.

The Teacher Induction Program, a relatively recent development, raises some challenging issues which must be resolved. Some of these issues are:

1. What role does the program play in the evaluation of the first-year teacher in the retention decision making process?
   a. Does the mentor prepare the inductee for the evaluation?
   b. Does the mentor provide information to the evaluation team?
   c. What is the university's role in the evaluation process when the inductee is not retained and when the inductee is retained but has not satisfied the university requirements for the course work taken during the program?

d. What kind of instrument is to be used in the evaluation process?

2. Should the mentor make in-class observations of the inductee?
3. Should the university specialist make in-class observations of the inductee?
4. Should university and local supervision of the inductee be generalized or specialized in nature?
5. What is the university's role in the Teacher Induction concept?

From the positive results of the eleven years of experimentation, the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater research demonstrates the program is effective in the following areas:

1. retaining teachers for the profession,
2. developing effective colleagial relationships to enhance professional dialogue,
3. making the first year of teaching easier for the new members of the profession.

Current plans are to continue to research the program, to develop induction sites, to train mentors, to assist and support the first-year teacher in every way possible, to expand the program to involve all first-year teachers in the Whitewater service area, and to expand the program throughout the Wisconsin Improvement Program consortium.

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